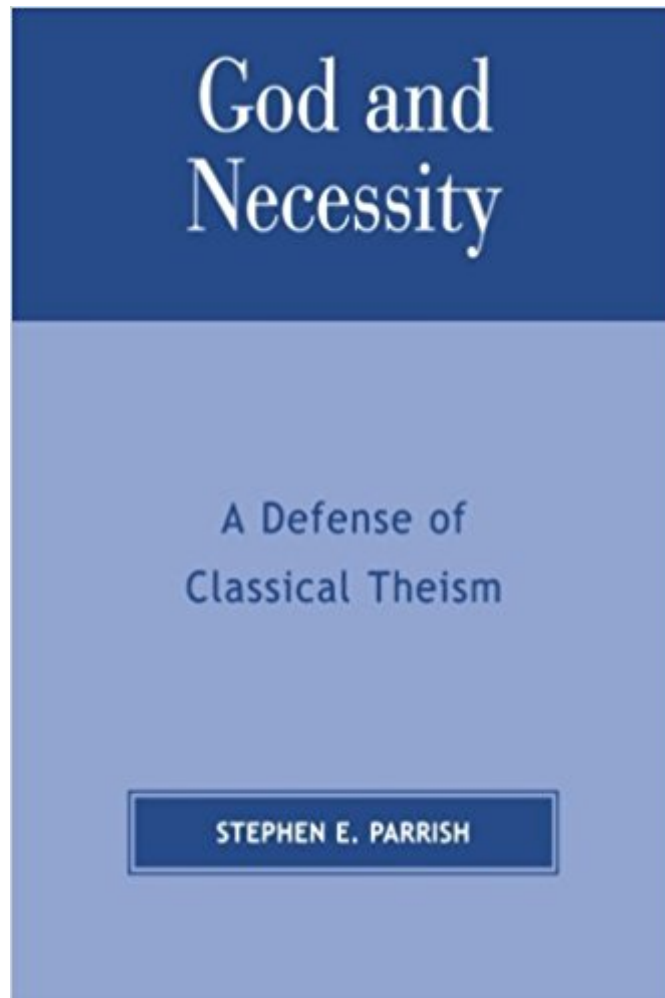




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God And Necessity: A Defense Of Classical Theism



Synopsis

God and Necessity: A Defense of Classical Theism argues that the God of classical theism exists and could not fail to exist. The book begins with the definition of key terms and analysis of the concepts of God and necessity. Extended examinations of the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments are given. The last chapters give an extended exposition and defense of the transcendental argument for God's existence. It is shown that rival accounts of the existence of universe, the Brute Fact and the Necessary Universe theories completely fail, while Necessary Deity, the concept of God existing in all possible worlds, succeeds. Only the latter can account for reality as it is, and can account for knowledge and justification.

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Customer Reviews

Overall, there is much to commend in this book, whatever one's philosophical perspective. It deserves interaction and careful thought, especially in areas where evangelical thinkers can sometimes tend towards stagnation.>>>> (Gary R. Habermas Philosophia Christi)Overall, there is much to commend in this book, whatever one's philosophical perspective. It deserves interaction and careful thought, especially in areas where evangelical thinkers can sometimes tend towards stagnation. (Gary R. Habermas Philosophia Christi)

Stephen E. Parrish is a Librarian and an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at William Tyndale College in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Parrish attempts to determine the meaning of the term "necessity" and then approaches the question of whether there is a being that could be termed necessary. To do this, Parrish must treat many other relevant ideas in philosophy of religion, which requires a strong familiarity with contemporary philosophical literature, with which he interacts well. There is much to commend here, such as Parrish's exceptional criticisms of both Brute Fact Theory and Necessary Universe theories, as well as his development of several arguments for the existence of God. Many thoughtful discussions here are not discovered often in the philosophical literature. One example of such is his treatment of the miracles issue. As a whole, this is an excellent work, regardless of one's outlook. I recommend it highly.

Dr. Gary R. Habermas

Stephen Parrish's *God and Necessity* is the best defense of classical theism I have read--and I've read extensively on the subject. The book is truly a masterpiece, a hidden gem. It is an exceptionally thorough, rigorous, and up-to-date defense of the existence of the Greatest Possible Being, or God. Parrish provides abductive probability proofs of the cosmological and teleological variety that really amount to certainty proofs, as well as the best--as it appears to be sound--version of a transcendental certainty argument for the existence of God I have come across. The book is based upon the author's Ph.D. dissertation, and was written under the supervision of scholars who disagreed with the author's positions. In other words, the thesis was forged in the trenches. Whether you are an open-minded agnostic or a believer in God already and, like Anselm, are seeking certainty for what you believe, this book is for you. Unfortunately, the price for the book is high--something the author could not control. I checked it out--and have re-checked and re-checked it--from a local theological library. But even if that is not an option, if this is a topic you are interested in--and surely we all ought to be supremely interested in this topic--the book is worth the price. Highly recommended!

p.s. Also highly recommended are Parrish's two other books *The Mormon Concept Of God: A Philosophical Analysis* and *See the Gods Fall: Four Rivals to Christianity*.

God and Necessity by Dr. Stephen E. Parrish is one of those books that is definitely exactly what the title says it is: a defense of classical theism that applies logical necessity to the concept of God. Dr. Parrish argues for the concept of God as the Greatest Possible Being (GPB). Because of this concept of God, one can draw a number of conclusions, including God's omnipotence, omniscience, omni-benevolence, etc. Dr. Parrish argues conclusively against the concept of a Factually Necessary God (FNG) as opposed to a Logically Necessary God (LNG) being the GPB.

The FNG exists in many worlds as the GPB, but not in all possible worlds. Only the LNG exists in all possible worlds as the GPB. He follows this with a form of the ontological argument unique to the work. Instead of grounding his version of the ontological argument on the premise that "Possibly, the GPB exists in some possible world" as most modal versions of the argument do, Parrish starts with "The concept of the GPB is coherent (82)." In this way, he avoids the problem that some versions of the argument don't address, which is that someone could simply deny that it is possible that the GPB exists in any possible world. Thus, Parrish's version is strengthened, for he bases it on concept of the GPB rather than on the modality of the GPB. In each chapter, Parrish fairly presents counter-arguments and refutes them. His argumentation is always clear and as concise as possible. I would compare his style of arguing with Plantinga's in that they both have a very clear flow of their book from start to finish, with each point building on the last throughout the work. Further, Parrish injects a touch of humor here and there in his work. My one criticism is that sometimes, in his efforts to refute as many counter-arguments as possible, Parrish dismisses them a little too easily. This was particularly evident in his discussion of the compatibility of omniscience with incompatibilist (I believe this is equivalent to libertarian) free will. I would love to see his style of systematic argumentation applied to this issue. Despite this, this discussion really wasn't all that relevant to the rest of his work, which may be part of the reason he didn't dwell on it. After presenting the case for the ontological argument, Parrish discusses the teleological and cosmological arguments, concluding that they may hold weight depending on one's own plausibility structure. This point is quite interesting: everyone has his or her own plausibility structure from which he or she judges everything, including other plausibility structures. Thus, an argument like the teleological argument may hold some weight in one structure, but not as much in another. Because of this, Parrish presents what he calls the "Transcendental Argument." This argument, in my own words, essentially states that God's existence is necessary for any kind of logical thought. The rest of the book focuses on this argument. Essentially, Parrish argues for this by presenting three possibilities for the universe: Brute Fact (the universe is chance), Necessary Universe (the universe exists for intrinsic reasons), and Necessary Deity (the universe exists because of an external, necessary being). He refutes the first two worldviews and provides support for the Necessary Deity (the GPB). This constitutes about half the book and is extremely useful, not just for its applicability in regards to the argument Parrish is making, but in that it helps refute various alternatives to theism. God and Necessity is a philosophical masterpiece. It has a broad scope, it is tightly argued, and it is extremely relevant. Despite very few minor flaws, Dr. Stephen E. Parrish's book, God and Necessity is an essential part of any Christian apologist's library.

Dr. Parrish does an outstanding job on discussing the logical need of a necessary God and his defense of the ontological argument is very well done.

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